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ADDRESS OF

MAJOR GENERAL LEONARD WOOD

TO THE OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE 41st INFANTRY,

AT THE KANSAS BUILDING,

CAMP FUNSTON, KANSAS, AUGUST 27th, 1918



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Colonel Kirkpatrick :

Officers and men of the 41st Infantry, we are assembled here this evening to hear some remarks from the Commanding General of Camp Funston, General Wood:

General Wood :

Officers and men of the 41st Infantry. I want to say this evening just a word to you about the work we are doing and why we are driving you on so rapidly. You men are going over now very soon to take part in the biggest war in the world's history, and one of the ugliest ones, and a lot of you are not coming back. It is not a war of the easy kind. There is nothing whatever to indicate that we are anywhere near the end of it. It is a hard, grinding

game of killing, without any of the romance of war. Nothing of the old battles, a day of hard fighting, or two days, or three days, and something definite coming out of it, but just a straight game of killing and the nation which can stand the killing the longest and the one that can smile last is the one that is going to win.

Now you men in your training, and when I say men I include every body here, for the officers are undergoing just as much in the way of training as the men, you all want to take this very seriously to heart, because some morning perhaps a month or two away or perhaps a little longer, you are going over the top. You are going to meet men just as good as you are, just as brave as you are, and far better trained perhaps. Unless you get the most out of it, you cannot expect to win. Do not think that these people are demoralized, the enemy. They are not. That is the misfortune we are laboring under, over confidence. We are going to win. The war is going to last until we do win, and it is not going to be an easy war. It is going to be a lot of hard work and there are going to be a lot of losses. So go on with the work and remember that the training you are getting here may be worth your life some day and try and learn and learn it thoroughly. Do not neglect any part of it. Be particularly attentive to the advice given you by the foreign officers.

They are men who have been thru the mill and they know what they are talking about and there is no man, whether he be a general officer on an enlisted man, who cannot learn a great deal from the man who has been over the top and has been thru the war, so listen to what they tell you. There is nothing that the enemy would like better than to have us come over and attempt to do what the British and French attempted, namely, to simply bull our way thru. You will go thru once perhaps, but you will leave a half a million men as the English did at the Somme and as the French did in the great attack last year. The "Break thru" idea sounds good always to new troops and we may be able to do it, but we have got to prepare for the every day hammer and drag of the war. So buckle down to the work. We have got to teach you a lot of dirty fighting because you are going to meet every dirty trick that kills. It doesn't make any difference whether fair or not. If you can be killed by the enemy you are going to be killed in any way that he can do it, so you will get a good deal of training which includes dirty fighting, all kinds of tricks to kill the other man. We are sorry to have to give you this sort of thing, but you want it, you want to know how to meet it. We want to give you men that kind of physical training which will make you feel that if you can only get at the

other fellow you can kill him. We want to give you confidence in yourselves, to make you strong on your feet, active and self reliant. It is not that you use the bayonet so much as it is the feeling that comes over you that you can use it well and if you are morally sure that you can kill the other fellow, he doesn't want you to reach him. He sees in your eyes, in your desire to close that you are hunting a close combat and nine times out of ten he gets out of your way. That is one of the psychological things that we learn in the game of war. We must continue this training. We must keep it up until you are well trained, so take it up and take it up seriously, because the training you are getting here may save your life some day.

Listen to your orders. Now do not think that you are being told a dismal tale. The worst enemy you have got, the worst enemy America has to-day is the man who preaches a blatant falsehood because that falsehood is a demoralizing enemy, and it doesn't hasten the end of the war. Get that out of your head. If we are going to win this war and win it well, we have got to put into it everything we have, not only in men, money and materiel, but everything we have got in spiritual and moral force. It is going to be a war fought by men of character, not a war for the mucker or the tough. He doesn't last long in this war. It is a war of hammer,

hammer, hammer, night and day, and it takes a man of good fibre and good character to carry that thing thru. You men can count upon one thing, that the best man makes the best soldier. If you go along the English or French lines in France there is no bragging, no vulgarity. It is fight all day, bomb all night, until you are more or less of a nervous wreck. Then you go into a rest camp for a week or two and then you come back and do it over again. Now it takes real character and real capabilities to go thru this war and that is why we do not find any of the inferior races in all the line. They are all gone. You find the best type of white troops, the best and most highly organized troops, in the front line. You find the others in the back used for other purpose, but the better the man all around the better the soldier. The other races do very well in shock actions, but they have not been able to stand that long hard grind of night and day bombardment.

Look out for your uniform. Keep it clean and remember that it is the uniform of your country. Do your work when you get in. Get into your uniform and do not take it anywhere you would not take your own family. You may think that this is going pretty strong, but it is not going strong. Look at the uniform as you would at the flag. Your uniform is one of the things that marks you as a

soldier, and there is nothing finer on earth than being a soldier, not a mercenary soldier selling his services first to one and then to another, that is about the worst thing a man can do, but I mean a soldier who is fighting from conviction and that is what we are fighting for. You are going in to give your lives, many of you and you are going to offer them, all of you, in the very best cause that a man ever died in or fought for. We have been brought into this war rather reluctantly. We have gone into it to save democracy. I do not mean political democracy. I mean democracy of government. We have gone into it to save representative government. Gone into it to make worthwhile and of some value the promises between nations, known as treaties, which have been wholly disregarded. Now we are violating all of our old traditions to keep out of entangling alliances, to keep out of foreign wars, and we are going across the ocean to help win the great fight of democracy and self-government against autocracy and intolerance. Now that is what you are going up against and that is the cause in which you are going to offer you lives. Now go over clean in mind, clean in body, because I can assure you that you will feel a lot better when the pinch comes, when you have to go into combat, if you are clean in mind as well as in body. Get rid of all loose language, all vulgarity. Remember that you are ded-

icated to a great cause. That you are going to give your life or your limbs, in any case you are going to offer everything you have. Do not feel that you are going to go over to win the war. That is an insult to our allies, who have fought all our battles for us and are fighting them all during this period while we are getting ready. Do not say to the men over there "We have come over to win the war," but be real soldiers, who are always modest. "We have come over to do our best. We know what you fellows have done, you have fought the battles of humanity and of free government for nearly three years before we came and we are coming now to do our part." Remember you are going into the land of these people who have been fighting your battles. You are going to live in their land. You are going to occupy their houses. You are going to come in contact with their people. Let your conduct always be that of soldiers, a soldier is a gentleman, a real soldier, always, in the best sense of the word.

I had a letter three nights ago from Bishop Brent, who may be known to some of you. He is the man who did so much in the Philippines. He said "I have just had a day with the 89th Division and I am not going to bed until I write you about it. They made a wonderful impression here in France. Nothing better. The people love them.

The children like them. They are going into the trenches tomorrow.” This letter was written on the third of August, and he says the Western Divisions, the 89th especially, have made a fine impression. Now you men, many of you in this regiment have come from the same section of the country and just make up your minds that you are going to do better than the 89th. You will have had more training. You will be better prepared when you go.

Respect your officers. We have got the machinery to give you the discipline of fear. We don’t want it. The discipline of fear is worth nothing, but we want you men to have discipline founded upon respect for and confidence in your officers. That is the kind of discipline that goes thru to the end and that is what we want you men to feel and you can only do it by always remembering that you have got to live up to the mark.

There has been a good deal of talk about saluting. You are doing it well here. It is not a mark of improper subordination. It is the mark of the proper military spirit. It is a mark of recognition between members of the great brotherhood of arms and we are all members of that brotherhood. If there is an officer who feels that he is not a member of it, he is not fit to be an officer and if there is a man here who doesn’t echo the spirit he is a poor soldier. Every salute you render has to

be returned. Your Colonel has to salute his General, his General his superior and so on, the last man salutes the President and he salutes the flag. It is a means of recognition in this great military organization. The officer does not want to humiliate you. He wants to preserve your self respect, but when you do salute an officer pull yourself together. Do not salute as tho you have spite in your face. Pull yourself together, hold your head up, look the officer squarely in the face, respectfully, and give him the salute in the proper snappy manner, which will mark you as a member of the profession of arms, which is the finest profession on God's earth, when rightly exercised. Remember this is the real foundation of a true soldier. He fights that right things may live. Now these recognitions between men belonging to this great military brotherhood are simply recognitions one to the other and always the subordinate to the senior.

I cannot tell you when you are going over. We do not know. It may be almost any moment. We are just sending out one of the Pioneer Regiments to-day after a very short period of training. There may be a hurry up call for the division at any time, so do your level best to get together. Your discipline is excellent. You are a new regiment. A new regular regiment. You are regular in the making, only new in the number and name,

but you have got your history ahead of you and remember what you do here as officers and men of the 41st Infantry is going to mark you as a good or poor regiment and it is mighty hard to get the brand of being a poor regiment off. You have nothing of tradition behind you. You have just been formed and in a way you are just like a man who is founding a family, who is building a record, as compared with the man who has inherited one and I think you have the best position. You can start this regiment, and give it a record that will make it live for all times, so buckle down, shut your teeth, live decent lives, get your training, go over and do your very best to win, and we will win.

